

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 89

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 71

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 89—Relative to America's Filipino Soldiers.

[Filed with Secretary of State June 5, 1998.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 89, Johnston. America's Filipino Soldiers.

This measure would recognize the heroic deeds of the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments, United States Army, as "California's Own," and supports documentation of their story in the film "An Untold Triumph: America's Filipino Soldiers."

WHEREAS, World War II is the most important period in the history of Filipino-Americans, the time when a war in the Pacific and a great calamity in their homeland brought them together for the most important fight of their lives for America; and

WHEREAS, The participation of Filipino-Americans in World War II changed forever the way they see themselves and the way most Americans think of them; and

WHEREAS, On December 7, 1941, America was attacked when the Imperial Japanese Naval Forces simultaneously bombed Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, then a territory of the United States, and the Philippines, a commonwealth of the United States; thus, plunging the United States into World War II; and

WHEREAS, Because of their unique status as "nationals," Filipino immigrants in the United States were denied the right to join the United States Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, With the persistence of Filipino Nationals, on January 2, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued an executive order allowing them to serve in the United States Armed Forces in a specially organized fighting unit; and

WHEREAS, Filipinos throughout the United States responded to the call to arms, coming from the laboring fields in domestic areas, farms, canneries, factories, and fisheries, thus, giving birth to the 1st Filipino Battalion, United States Army, which was formed at San Luis Obispo, California on April 1, 1942; and

WHEREAS, The 1st Filipino Battalion then grew into the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment, United States Army, by July 13, 1942; and

WHEREAS, The 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment, United States Army, was formed on October 2, 1942; and

WHEREAS, Seven thousand Filipino volunteers were trained in the following California camps: Fort Ord, Hunter Liggett, Camp Beale, Camp Cook, and Camp Kohler; and

WHEREAS, Thousands were sworn in as citizens in mass ceremonies in California and were fondly dubbed as “California’s Own”; and

WHEREAS, Upon learning of these organized units, the Allied Supreme Commander of the Pacific Far East, General Douglas MacArthur, needing “eyes and ears” in the Philippines, selected 800 men forming the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (Special Forces) for special training in Australia; and

WHEREAS, These men were secreted into the Philippines by submarines and completed more than 280 missions to infiltrate enemy lines, collecting and sending vital military data on ship and troop movements, and to train guerrillas in preparation for General MacArthur’s return to the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, In these endeavors, the casualties for the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion were: 164 killed, 6 wounded, 178 missing, and 75 captured; and

WHEREAS, All members of the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion were awarded the Bronze Star with valor; and

WHEREAS, The 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments, United States Army, arriving in New Guinea for advanced training, were looked upon as a valuable source of specialized soldiers, resulting in more volunteers to other special units of the 6th and 8th Armies for counterintelligence, civil-affairs assignments, and rescue missions, such as the freeing of American prisoners of the infamous “Bataan Death March,” who were held captive in Cabanatuan, and carrying out the “Shangri-la Mission,” rescuing United States Women Army Corp personnel whose plane was downed in the jungles of New Guinea; and

WHEREAS, Other soldiers fought as a unit in cleanup operations in Leyte, Samar, and other islands of the Malay Archipelago; and

WHEREAS, Upon the cessation of hostilities, the 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiment was disbanded in Manila, the 1st Reconnaissance Battalion (Special Forces) was disbanded in New Guinea, and the 1st Filipino Infantry Regiment was returned to the United States for deactivation in California on April 9, 1946; and

WHEREAS, These Filipino war veterans returned home proud to have contributed to the cause of democracy and freedom; and

WHEREAS, With the laws on their side as citizens with veterans’ rights, and the “GI Bill,” these veterans began to forge their lives as citizens, making contributions to their communities and the nation by serving as entrepreneurs, professional and public leaders, and attaining better lives for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS, Those men who returned to the United States with Filipina war brides established a new generation of Filipino families in this country; and

WHEREAS, Since very little is known about these veterans, who are now in their 80's and 90's, recognition of their "untold story" should become public to the community and to nation at large; and

WHEREAS, To acknowledge their experiences, exploits, and heroic deeds, a 60-minute film documentary is in the making entitled "An Untold Triumph: America's Filipino Soldiers"; and

WHEREAS, When completed, the film will become available to the vast television audience and to schools throughout the nation as another example of a great American story; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature, in this year of 1998, the celebratory year of the 100th Anniversary of Philippine Independence from Spain and its continued celebration of American-Philippine independence friendship, hereby recognizes the heroic deeds of the 1st and 2nd Filipino Infantry Regiments, United States Army, as "California's Own," and supports documentation of their story in the film "An Untold Triumph: America's Filipino Soldiers"; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

